

LILIES IN AUSTRALIA

by

Mrs. M. K. Goodall

I HAD the great pleasure of spending about two months in Australia in the early part of this year. My husband and I left England on 23rd November 1966, and sailed via Lisbon, Trinidad through the Panama to Los Angeles, San Francisco, Honolulu, Suva and Auckland, arriving in Sydney on 2nd January (right in the middle of the Australian summer). To my delight I found that the Annual *Lilium* Display of the New South Wales Branch of the Australian *Lilium* Society was to be held in Sydney on 10th and 11th January.

We attended this Show, which was opened by MRS. J. R. MCSPEERIN, Vice-President and Chairman of the Garden Club of Australia. We were amazed to see such a display of lovely lilies. There we met MR. C. N. SMITH of Bilpin, who judged the Show. He had himself an extensive display of lilies.

The Champion Stem, *Lilium* 'Christabel' (*Parkmannii*), was submitted by MR. A. R. BEGG of Sydney and we took a flash photograph of this stem and a number of other beautiful lilies such as 'Pink Sensation' raised by DR. YEATES of New Zealand, *L.* 'Wildfire' (*Parkmannii* cross) submitted by MR. E. S. CHAPMAN, *Auratum* hybrid 'Lavender Lady' and 'Deanne', a seedling raised by MR. A. R. BEGG.

MRS. CECILY WOODFULL DAVIDSON had sent from Melbourne an excellent stem of *L.* 'Cecily' which was a seedling registered with the R.H.S. in 1966 (*centifolium* × *regale*) × Golden Clarion Strain.

From Sydney we made our way by car down the Hume Highway to Canberra where we visited the Yeralumba Nursery (i.e. the Commonwealth Nursery) where sixty flowering shrubs and ten trees are given free to each new householder in Canberra during their first two years. The Manager of this Nursery, who had just arrived from England, had the task of doubling the capacity of the Nursery within ten years as it is anticipated that the population of Canberra will be doubled within this period. Here, we saw very few lilies, apart from *L. henryi* (*citrinum*).

Canberra is a very attractive city and we stayed here two days enjoying the wonderful scenery and the beautifully planned city with its avenues of trees and its fine man-made lakes.

We then proceeded to Ferny Creek in the Dandenong Mountains (approx. 24 miles from Melbourne) and discovered to my delight that most of the Committee of the Australian Lilium Society lived and grew their lilies within an area of four miles of our residence. We were invited to attend their monthly meeting at the Memorial Hall on 25th January and here we met a number of the Committee and members of the Society including their President, MR. B. G. HAYLER and DR. R. N. WITHERS—author of *Liliums in Australia*, which book, I understand from DR. WITHERS, is now ready and costs A.\$8.00 plus postage, and from various reports I have received, is well worth buying. I understand that it gives a valuable and new approach to the problems confronting all lily growers.

Many lilies were on show at this monthly meeting and I was interested to see that this was a competitive show. The judges then announced that DR. WITHERS had the best stem of the evening, a *L. auratum* var. *rubro-vittatum*. One of the judges—MR. GORDON CHANDLER (a commercial grower) then commented on all the lilies, followed by comments of members each in turn on their own lilies. MR. HAYLER then asked me to say a few words. I told them that I had found listening to all they said about their lilies most enlightening and instructive, especially as we could actually examine for ourselves the lilies which they had cut, and which must have been quite a sacrifice. The members were extremely friendly and MR. HAYLER then asked me to open their Annual Show at Olinda, which was to be held on 11th and 12th February, and this I promised to do.

We found that the members of the Australian Lilium Society are extremely enthusiastic and are doing everything possible to encourage the growing of lilies.

We spent a very pleasant morning at the home of MR. and MRS. DAVIDSON, their garden being full of lovely lilies, the *auratum virginale* were some of the finest I have ever seen. The garden was full of surprises, many lilies being seedlings of MRS. DAVIDSON's own crosses, one of which I understand is to be registered as 'David's Glory'.

We also visited the Botanical Gardens at Melbourne and Gordon Chandler's Nursery, where he grows lilies in an open field with no shade whatsoever. I was amazed to see fields of lilies under very dry conditions under century heat, which we had for about a week. We then visited DR. WITHERS' garden in Olinda and here he grows lilies under extremely dry conditions, being dependent entirely on the rainfall.

The Annual Show at Olinda opened after two days of wonderful

weather (about 75°F.) and despite the century heat of the previous week there was a grand display of lilies, attractively laid out, the public almost queueing up to gain admission, and the show a sensation. We took flash photographs of some of these magnificent lilies. MR. BASIL HAYLER, their President, showed the best lily in the Show, *L. 'Ember-glow'*, which had ten flowers open and six buds to come.

The First Prize Exhibit for a Display Featuring *Liliums* was by MURRAY GARDINER; his Parkman hybrids were most spectacular and almost overwhelming in size. We learned that he grew all his lilies in a shade house and as a result they were in excellent condition. Pride of place was given to a very fine stem of *L. auratum* var. *virginale* 'Ward' whose whiteness and purity were highlighted by the surrounding dark pink of several enormous blooms of *L. 'Wildfire'*.

DR. WITHERS' display won the Blue Ribbon for the Best Exhibit in the Open Section. Stems of *L. leichtlinii* var. *maximowiczii* contrasted with the creamy whiteness of *L. 'Lavender Lady'*, 'Betty' and *L. 'Sincerity'*. *L. formosanum* was sprinkled among Aurelians—'Sungold', 'Lime Gold', 'Cornfield', 'Mimosa Star', 'Stardust' and 'Citronella'. Eye-catching as a show piece in the centre of the top row was a beautiful stem of *L. 'Christabel'* whose flowers were perfect. *L. speciosum* in abundance and many Parkman hybrids completed a most attractive display.

MRS. DAVIDSON carried off second prize in this section with her collection of singles—over seventy blooms; most were variations of *L. speciosum* and Parkman seedlings with several *L. tigrinum flore pleno*. MRS. DAVIDSON also showed a lovely seedling which she proposed to name *L. 'Green Lady'* if it can be grown on successfully. It is a seedling of *L. 'Gold Lady'*.

President BASIL HAYLER's exhibit consisted of four tiers of stems of gold band type auratums and hybrids interspersed with singles. He showed wonderful blooms of *L. 'Wildfire'* and *L. 'Sanguine'*, also a new seedling provisionally named *L. 'Annette Gay'* which had pink spots and a pink flush at the end of the petals. The inner two-thirds of the petals were yellow.

There, too, was a fine collection from New Zealand which took the Blue Ribbon with an eye-catching display of Parkman hybrids and a few Golden Clarion, also very dark *L. 'Black Knight'* and another unnamed seedling whose colouring was of dark plum or blackberry juice.

We spent a further very pleasant day with the Davidsons at the Cumberland Falls and Steavenson's Falls, Marysville, where the tallest trees in Australia grow, mountain ash (*Eucalyptus*), 271 ft. tall.

Then a visit to the MISSES LIPSCOMB's garden in Belgrave, also in the Dandenong Mountains, where 250,000 *Cardiocrinum giganteum* grow. A visit with DR. BOB WITHERS to the National Rhododendron Garden at Olinda, and to the largest Rhododendron Nurseries in Australia before we left Melbourne to return, via the Coast Road, to Sydney. Also a trip from Cooma to the Snowy Mountain Scheme and then the flight home with a few days stay each at Hong Kong, Bangkok, Calcutta, Madras and Bombay.

The Australian Liliun Society are celebrating their Tenth Anniversary. I understand that it is just over ten years since MR. ROBERT F. NELSON first conceived the idea of a Liliun Society within Australia, and through the efforts of their Society, its learning, its teaching and its encouragement, a large number of lilies previously unknown in Australia are being grown and I feel we must congratulate them on their achievement.